

INSTITUTIONAL COMPONENT IN THE CURRENT GLOBAL CRISIS

Abstract

The setting of the new rules which have to govern the human society is the opportunity opened by the dangers arising from the current moral, cultural, spiritual and intellectual crisis, from a new system of values affecting the economy as an organic part of human society and the "systemic wisdom" what characterizes our "whole common living".

Keywords: crisis, whole common living, systemic wisdom, institutional respiration, intelligent self - governance

JEL CODES: A10, H12, E00

COMPONENTA INSTITUȚIONALĂ ÎN ACTUALA CRIZĂ GLOBALĂ

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Rezumat

Reconstrucția regulilor jocului deschis și neterminat al societății omenești este oportunitatea ce rezultă din pericolele cauzate de actuala criză morală, culturală, spirituală și intelectuală, pornind de la un sistem nou de valori care privesc economia ca parte organică a societății omenești și a „înțelepciunii sistemice” ce caracterizează „întregul nostru viu comun”.

Cuvinte cheie: criză, întregul viu comun, înțelepciune sistemică, respirare instituțională, autogovernare inteligentă.



Proceedings of the seventh Administration
and Public Management International
Conference

1. INSTITUTIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF "INTEGRATED WHOLE"

Researches undertaken from the perspective of experts in quantum physic, transpersonal psychology, systemic biology and holistic medicine emphasize the need to interpret life at the level of our microcosm as "integrated whole" (Capra, 2004, p. 33)¹ under the institution of the "systemic wisdom", as called by Bateson (1972, p. 434), which brings back in terms of knowledge the formula used by Hwa Yen philosophy: "One in All, All in One, One in One, All in All" (Grof, 2008, p. 544).

Both pre-existing natural environment and man-made environment - in response to the intelligence of nature, under conditions of uncertainty - have each their own rules (institutions) which are products either of "systemic wisdom" of our microcosm, or of the organic need to harmonize the subsystems in the human society, to integrate them through accordance, coherence and resonance" (Laszlo & Currivan, 2010, p. 98-99) in the common and conscious living of the Planet Earth (Capra, 2004, p. 358) (see fig. no. 1).

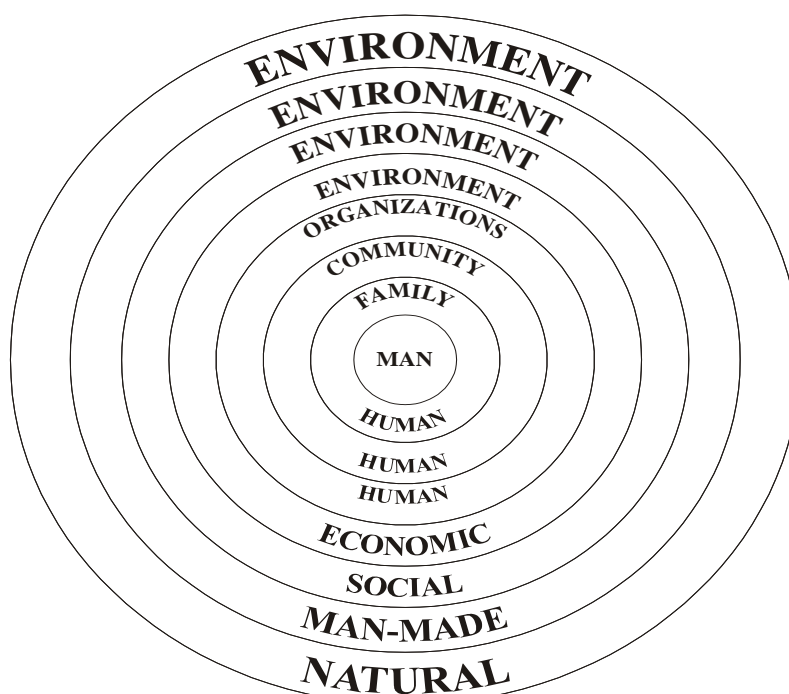


FIGURE 1 - WHOLE COMMON LIVING

¹ According to Fritjof Capra "The systemic vision of the world is in terms of relationships and integration. Each body - from the smallest bacteria, through the great variety of plants and animals to humans - is an integrated whole and as such, a living system. Cells are living systems, as well as the various tissues and organs of the body, the most complex example being represented by the human brain.

The interpretation we give in this study to the concept of institution is based on the assessment of the systemic vision, which outlines the dawn of a new paradigm of life as "integrated whole". Accordingly, there is a "systemic homeostasis" (Capra, 2004, p. 342), expression of "systemic wisdom", where the rules which accompany the natural or the man-made living are specific, but in relationships of interconnection and integration.

Essentially, the institution is a system of rules that form the homeostasis of each whole individual living, a specific coordinated set of processes that ensure the maintenance of the balance that has a substantive and lasting influence on the respective living system (Selye, 1984, p. 310).

Under this interpretation we might consider that the microcosm we are an organic part of has its own systemic homeostasis, which Bateson (1972) called a "systemic wisdom". The defining elements of these rules that we call "systemic wisdom institutions" can be characterized, by: consistency, coherence and integrity.

In this respect, all cosmic processes require that nothing will deviate too much from the harmony of proportion regarding the "integrated whole". Obviously, this interpretation includes the institution called "human homeostasis", as it was discovered long ago by the American physiologist Walter B. Cannon.

In the epilogue to his book "Wisdom of the body", entitled "The relationship between biological and social homeostasis", Walter Cannon wonders if it was "not worth to study other bodies, for instance, the industrial or social ones in terms of how the human body is organized?" (Selye, 1984, 334).

Indeed, in the man-made environment consisting of family, human communities, organizations, states, etc., we have the same rules of "the integrated whole" based on harmony within each subsystem, but also on compatibility between them, so that the operating rules (institutions) to enable the continuation of a social homeostasis in harmony with the human biology homeostasis, as reflected "systemic wisdom" of the "whole common living".

If we consider that man is both nature and society, it means that in the environment he created, the rules - as a system - that define family, community, economic and social life homeostasis must integrate, into a systemic proportionality, the defining elements of the two determinations of human behavior: biological and social.

Thus, in economic life, made up of business organizations, the basic institution which forms the homeostasis is known as the "invisible hand of systemic wisdom". In social life, composed at national level of public organizations having civic interest and at international level of public organizations with

global concern, the basic institution forming homeostasis is known as the "visible hand of systemic wisdom".

Somehow, the relationship between these two "hands" that assures the self-regulation and the adjustment processes in man-made environment, we could say that reflects the proportion between the nature and the society of Man (see also fig. no. 2).

Such an interpretation helps us to understand how the crisis occurs in each of these man-made "integrated whole", which characterizes the state system of the socio-economic environment, the role played in this crisis, the institutional component, and its interaction with other components that define the homeostasis of the economic and social life.

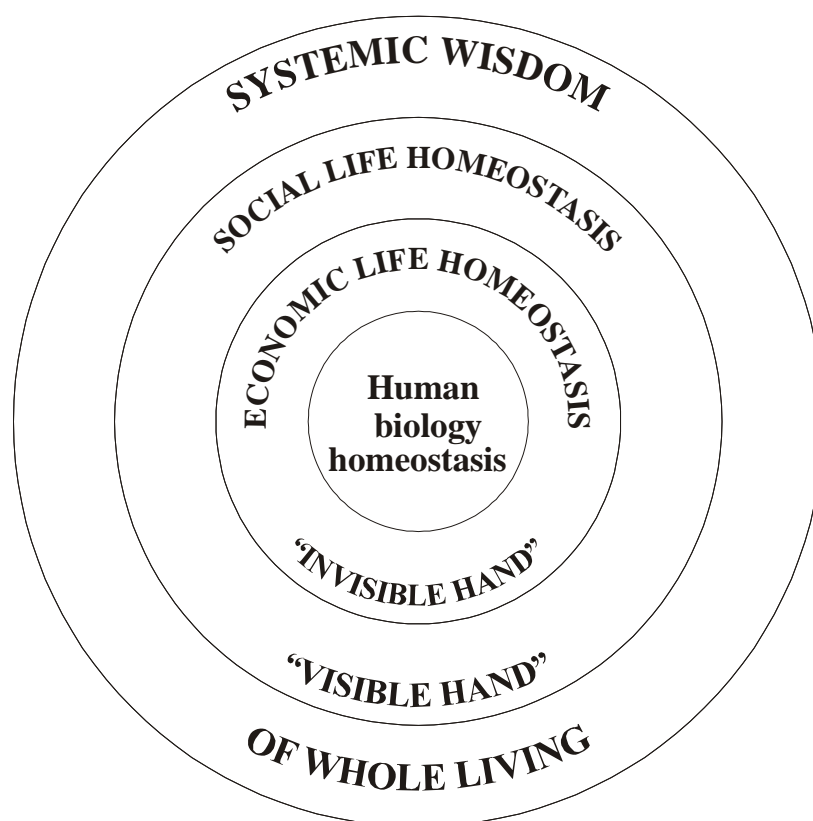


FIGURE 2 - "INTEGRATED WHOLE" INSTITUTIONS

2. WHAT IS THE CURRENT GLOBAL CRISIS?

Based on the interpretation of the rules (institutions) that characterize the "whole common living" homeostasis where the man-made environment is an organic part, we propose to reflect on the following thesis: the crisis is the direct expression of the excesses and deficits that disturbs the homeostasis of living, beyond its own possibilities of self-regulation in each living system.

Expressed as “walking the opposite direction”, beyond the normal expectation, beyond limits of self-regulation by its own homeostasis, the crisis represents a deviation from the normal sense of the human and institutional behavior (Popescu, Costea, Taşnadi, 2010) (see fig. no. 3).

Deficits that exceed the “critical mass” of any living system represent one of the fundamental causes of any living organism crisis: individual, family, community, business organization, state, etc.

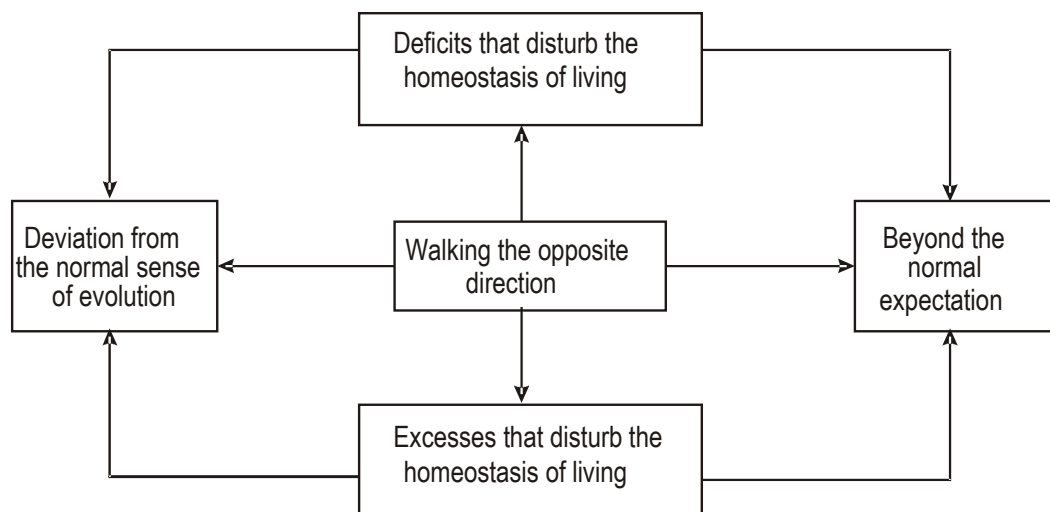


FIGURE 3 - THE CRISIS IN THE “WHOLE COMMON LIVING”

The category of deficits systems that disturb the homeostasis of any living system created by humans includes: deficit of “home” (known to us as “the absence of seven years from home”, when the fundamental values of life are accumulated); educational deficit (including education on the “opposite direction”); deficit of genuine knowledge; labor shortages; deficit of love; accountability deficit; budget deficit; trade deficit; the deficit of “having” (threatening the survival); investment deficit; savings deficit etc. (see fig. no. 4).

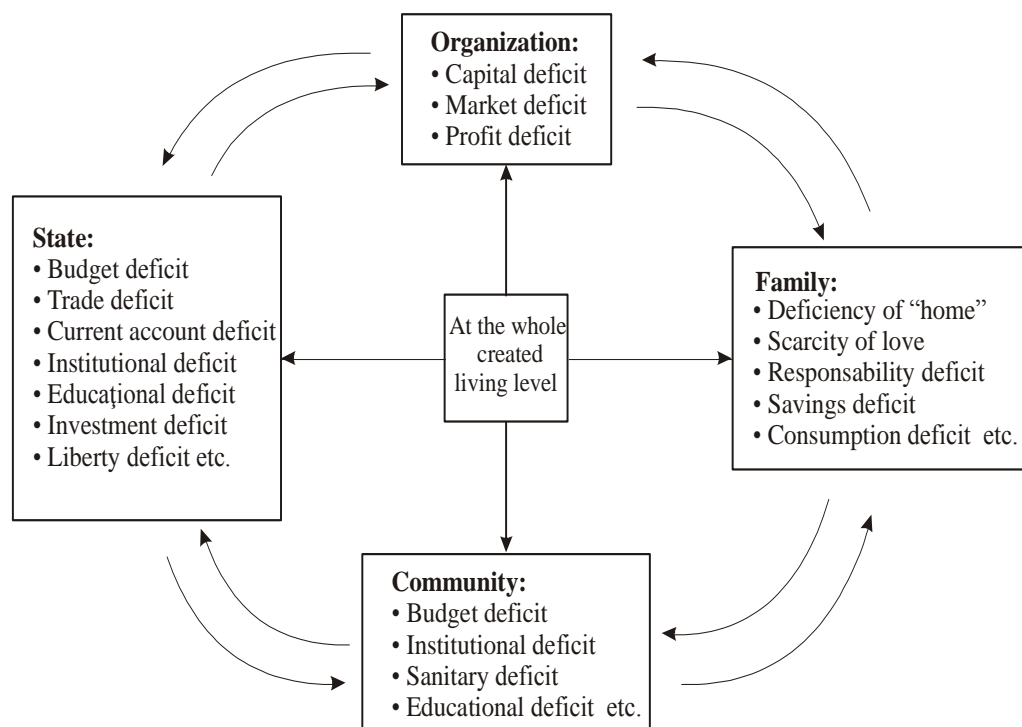


FIGURE 4 - THE CRISIS THROUGH THE DEFICITS OF HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR

At the same time, the excesses of human and institutional behavior affecting the critical mass of living organisms created by man, agitating their homeostasis, represent the second fundamental cause that produces crises in any living system.

In the category of excesses we can integrate the following: market excesses, excesses of greed, over consumption unchecked by any moral law, excess money supply, excess lies in politics, the excesses of quantifying economic life related to use the growth of GDP when the economy pollutes the environment and produces goods that endanger human life, excesses of debt (or long living on credit), etc..

Each of these excesses, specific to human, family, business organization, state, etc., beyond the homeostasis own requirements, are considered the second class of causes that produce crises (see fig. no. 5).

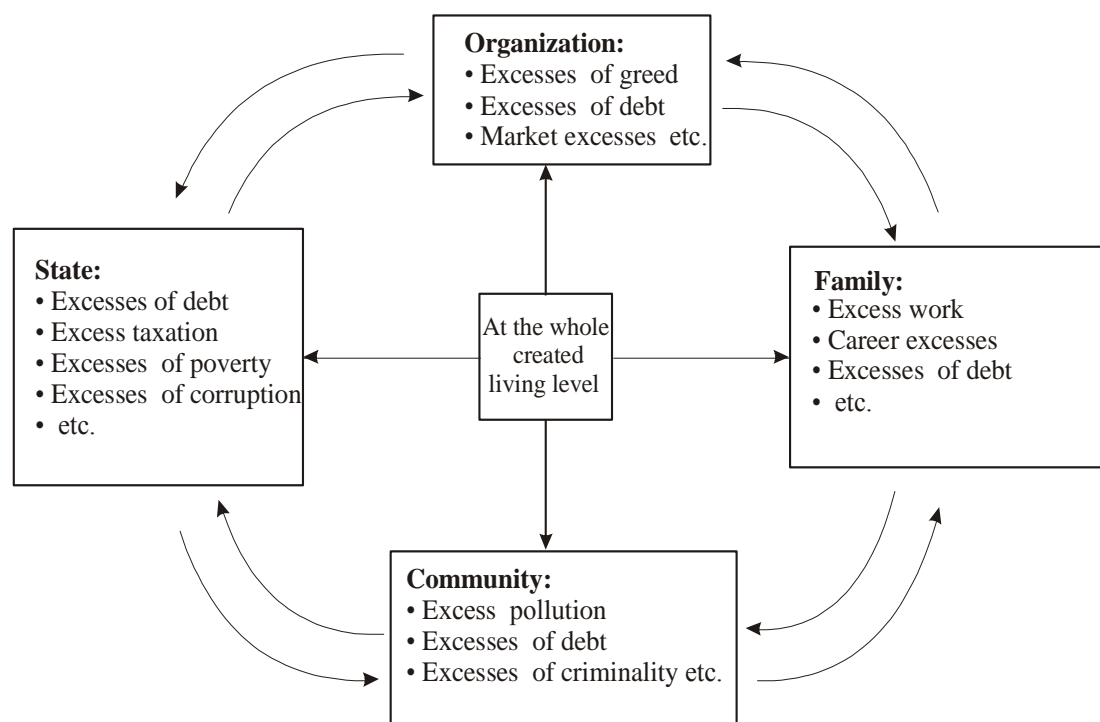


FIGURE 5 - CRISIS THROUGH THE EXCESSES OF HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR

Excesses and deficits resulting from the manifestation of human and institutional behavior on “opposite direction” in a period of time, beyond its own capacity to adjust through the systemic homeostasis, contribute directly to the crises related to the different aspects of life: human, family, community, economy, state.

In terms of strength, the deficits and excesses that determine the emergence of the “integrated whole” crisis, we can interpret not only the relationship **causes - threats**, but also the interaction **factors - opportunities**.

As one knows, in each crisis at every level of the “integrated whole”, we can meet both the threats posed by the joint action of deficits and excesses of human and institutional behavior and also the opportunities arising from the systemic understanding of the causes that disturbed the specific homeostasis.

From this perspective, an appropriate human and institutional behavior includes: crisis consciousness, real knowledge of causes related to deficits and excesses, collaboration with those who know and want the exit from the crisis, confidence, faith and hope.

Viewed this way, the current global crisis is considered by Capra (2004) as “a complex and multidimensional crisis, whose faces touch every aspect of our lives - the health and livelihoods, the

environment quality and the social, economic, technological and political relationship. This is a crisis of intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions, a crisis of an unprecedented magnitude in human history" (Capra, 2004, p. 3).

Therefore, this global crisis is a systemic one, the expression of disharmonies between the man-made environment and the natural environment, on which the crisis of the current paradigm in science leaves its mark, whereby the economy was perceived, conceived and founded as being torn from the human and social environment and fatally cut off from the natural environment.

This systemic crisis, affecting also the economy is the result of applying a scientific paradigm which is fragmented and which broke all parts of the "whole common living", promoting criteria-indicators that increase when the homeostasis of the world's ecology and of the social life is disturbed.

For example, using GDP per capita, as it is currently calculated, as a fundamental indicator of the HDI (Human Development Index), we believe it is the consequence of this narrow scientific vision in contradiction with the current systemic view, like the "integrated whole".

If we take into account the considerations of Pope John Paul II (2008), on the relationship between science and faith in the past century, it appears evident that the current global crisis is the result of rupture of these two branches of the same tree, as Einstein called them. In the past century, says the Pope, the world has promoted an anti-scientific religion and an anti-religious science, the resulting feedback being especially against natural, human and social life.

Man today seems permanently threatened by what he himself produces, through the work of his hands, his intelligence and his will. In a very fast and often unpredictable way, the fruits of these multiform human activities are not only subject to "alienation", for instance, they are simply taken from one who produces them, but moreover, these fruits turn against man himself, are or may be directed against him. Here seems to be the main drama of human consciousness today, in the broadest and universal dimension (Pope John Paul II, 2008, p. 32).

Having regard to the above, we estimate that what is needed, today more than ever, is the human re-spiritualization and on this basis, the institutional re-spiritualization, the global reconstruction of the values and rules that must be the foundation of the future society (Popescu & Țașnadi, 2009).

3. THE CRISIS IS INSIDE US

From the perspective of our analysis, the crisis is not only the expression of excesses and deficits that accompany human behavior which disturb the homeostasis of living, but also the manifestation of sick

institutions that have outlived, aging, turning into the opposite of the motivation that generated them. The spirit of this interpretation is found in the wisdom of the sentence with which Nobel Prize laureate in medicine, Szent-Györgyi (1982) opens the chapter "About Institutions", of his book, "Pleading for life": "Like men, the institutions are getting old" (Szent-Györgyi, 1982, p. 210).

In view of systemic biology, the institutions forming the human biology homeostasis with a clear and well defined role in human self governance are not only turning into their opposite, but like the energy with which we operate, as human beings, the functions of our "whole common living" organs are getting diminished until extinction.

What do we do, when the institutions created by man are getting older, meaning that no longer serve the purpose for which they were created that is to serve the fulfillment of human life in harmony with the "whole common living" to which we belong? These institutions, becoming the opposite of their mission, get to generate excesses and deficits behaviors, which disturb the homeostasis of living of the "whole common living" (Szent-Györgyi, 1982, p. 210).

In this respect, Szent-Györgyi (1982, p. 211) states: "Being made of people whose interests are identical to those of the institutions they serve, most public institutions seek to acquire more power and end up serving mainly their own interests, rather than the purpose for which they were created. This means that, rather than to remain in the service of people, most of the public institutions tend to become their own masters".

Romania, which since 1990 has been going through a process of "transformations of meaning", should have adopted new rules for the biology of political, economic and social life, in order to promote institutional behaviors in harmony with the health requirements of the "whole common living".

What happened in reality? In our case, as elsewhere, revolutionaries seized the power, forgetting the aims of the revolution, entering into the wisdom as defined by Lord Acton: "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely." That is why the main cause of the systemic crisis that we have been in for more than 20 years is residing in not having assimilated at the moral, cultural and spiritual level the changes that have occurred.

The institution of the morality of transformations was thrown away, and that has allowed the functioning of the "invisible hand" based on rules of pathological greed and individualism. As Mrs. Gandhi was saying, the Earth has resources for all human needs, but not for human greed. This is valid for the microcosm named Romania as well.

Essentially, the lack of institutional responsibility has been the second leading cause of the systemic crisis we are in. No one is responsible for the fact that after two decades of changes, there are increasingly negative consequences in terms of economic and living standards of most citizens!

The productive capacity deficit of the Romanian economy widened more sharply in the last period of transformations, both by destroying the old productive function, under the imperative privatization of state enterprises and by the inability to replace this function with a new one, highly efficient and competitive, based on new rules, described as healthy and moral "change of meaning".

Such a serious deficiency, which affected employment, labor productivity, competitiveness and people's income, generated a counter-institutional behavior, of living on credit. We consider that the excessive debt to pay wages and pensions is the most obvious expression of the "opposite driving" during this period.

To get there where the number of pensioners exceeds that of employees and do nothing to restore this correlation at macroeconomic level, we consider that this is the most serious consequence of institutional changes such as "forms without substance", that define the current crisis as a breaking of meanings crisis.

In fact, we are in a profound conflict of human behaviors that threaten the human survival in terms of choices, but also in terms of fulfilling the human life. Overcoming the current crisis is linked organically to the institutional re-spiritualization as a need to pass to a new value system that promotes the health of the "whole common living".

The global nature of the crisis reveals ever more strongly the need to build vital functions of institutional re-spiritualization, in order to promote environment protection, human rights and economic justice, to fight against the nuclear danger and the Cartesian framework of the current economic thinking.

In essence, the critical mass necessary for the transition to a revolution of global consciousness (Saszlo, Grof, Russell, 2009) requires that new alliances and coalitions with institutional and spiritual character enter the political arena.

Such a transformation, seen from an evolutionary perspective with a broad cultural opening, finds favorable ground today with a new understanding of reality, when the decline of old institutional model values is favored by the rise of new institutional model of health values of the "whole common living" (see also fig. no. 6).

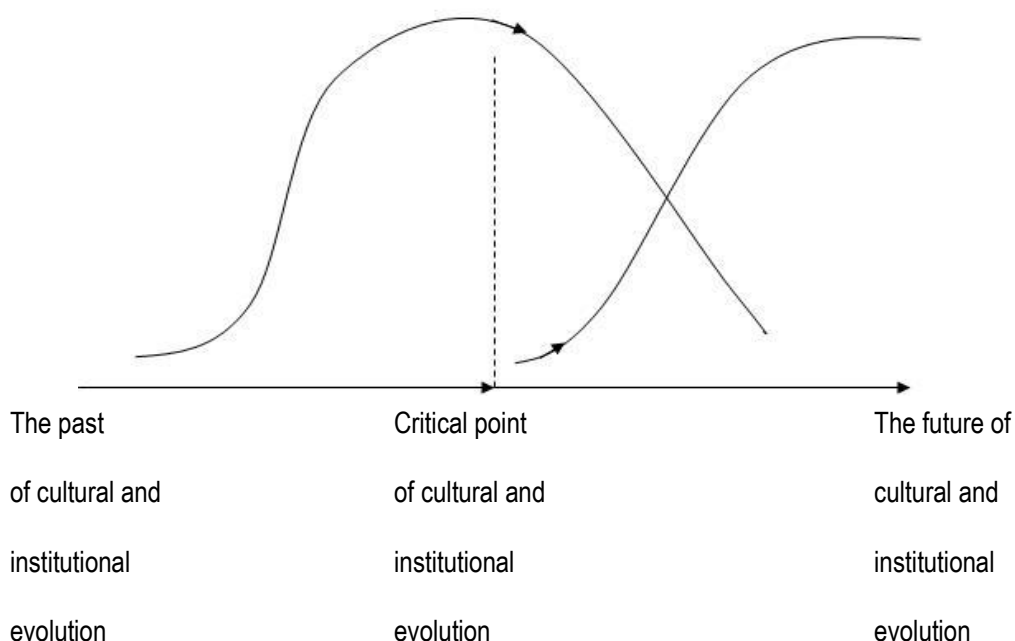


FIGURE 6 - CULTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

In this process of cultural transformation, "... the decline occurs when a culture has become too rigid - with its technologies, ideas or social organization - to address the challenge of changing circumstances. This loss of flexibility is accompanied by a general loss of harmony, leading to social discord and disruption. During the process of decay, the dominant social institutions still impose their outdated views, but gradually disintegrate, while new creative minorities are facing new challenges with ingenuity and increasing confidence" (Capra, 2004, p. 533).

Today, we witness a decline in the institutional culture that refuses to change, to give leadership roles to the new institutional and cultural forces. But the current global crisis is just the beginning of the critical point, where the cultural transformation on very long term will disintegrate short-term political activities, based on obsolete values, on institutions that oppose the "change of meaning".

The current global crisis, considered by humanistic scientists as a moral, cultural and institutional crisis raises the question of changes in scientific paradigm, but also in political paradigm, in the sense that "everything that we create has to serve us, the man, the community and not to become their master. The machines are good as they are our tools and serve us. If the machines become our masters, if they trouble life, filling the world with dirt and noise, it means that they are no longer useful" (Szent-Györgyi, 1982, p. 213-214).

The same can be said about technocracy - it is great if it helps us to produce more efficiently and get more free time to allocate to achieve high spiritual and cultural aspirations. Also, the large corporations

are good when they make our lives richer, not poorer, if we are treated as people and not as numbers. In general, progress is great if what it generates helps us to fulfill our life, if it reduces the occupational stress and does not jeopardize the ecological life of which we are an organic part.

The current global crisis is in our opinion a crucial moment in human evolution. It raises to the status of institutional morality our freely choices model. Overcoming the crisis in the name of sustainability requires to move to "responsible freedom" as it was called by Angela Merkel, so everything we create with our minds and our hands has to serve us, not to rule us; all the goods the progress brings must belong to us, must serve the health of the "whole common living", composed of people, families, communities, organizations and environment.

Institutional re-spiritualization is the key to overcome the current global crisis, so that countries around the world should not be hated but beloved; nations should not be dehumanized and divided, but in harmony with the ideal of "being"; democracy should not be based on lies and the will to power, but on the respect of the will of free and responsible people; globalization should not be seen as a "destiny", driven by the powerful, but as a genuine process of dedicating knowledge, faith and love to benefit of all, whether in North or South, East or West of our live and conscious microcosm.

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